

China

Opium Wars

In the early 1800s, the British treasury was being depleted due to its dependence upon imported tea from China. The Chinese still considered their nation to be the **Middle Kingdom**, and therefore viewed the goods the Europeans brought to **trade** with as nearly worthless trinkets. To solve this trade imbalance Britain imported opium, processed from poppy plants grown in the Crown Colony of India, into China.

Chinese officials attempted to ban the importation of the highly addictive opium, but ultimately failed. The British declared war on China in a series of conflicts called the **Opium Wars**. Superior British military technology allowed them to claim victory and subject the Chinese to a series of **unequal treaties**.



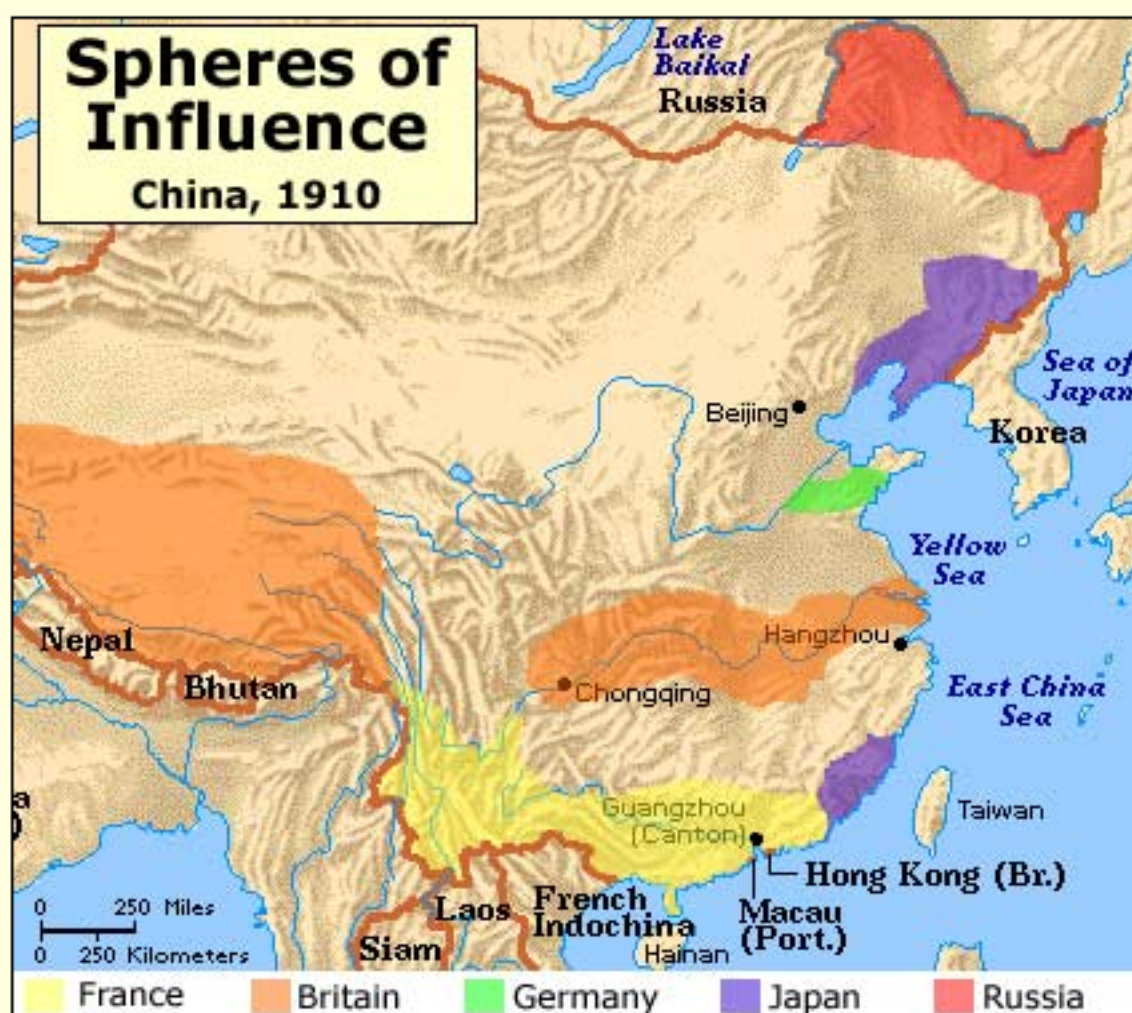
Unequal Treaties

According to the 1842 **Treaty of Nanjing**, the Chinese were to:

1. Reimburse Britain for costs incurred fighting the Chinese
2. Open several ports to British trade
3. Provide Britain with complete control of Hong Kong
4. Grant **extraterritoriality** to British citizens living in China

Spheres of Influence

Eventually several European nations followed suit, forcing China to sign a series of unequal treaties. **Extraterritoriality** guaranteed that European citizens in China were only subject to the laws of their own nation and could only be tried by their own courts. Eventually western nations weary of governing foreign lands, established **spheres of influence** within China which guaranteed specific trading privileges to each nation within its respective sphere.



Eventually the United States demanded equal trading status within China, and rather than carve out its own sphere of influence, simply announced the **Open Door Policy** in 1899. This stated that all nations should have equal trading rights regardless of spheres of influence. While this may have prevented the further expansion of spheres of influences, it did little to restore Chinese **sovereignty**.

Chinese Reaction

Disgusted with the failed efforts of the Manchu Dynasty in ridding China of opium or foreign influence after the Opium Wars, Chinese citizens staged the **Taiping Rebellion** between 1850-1864. Already weakened, the Chinese officials turned to foreigners for help in putting down the rebellion, killing millions of Chinese in the process.

After the further insult of the Open Door Policy, Chinese nationalist staged the **Boxer Rebellion** in 1900. Viewed as a threat to the profits they enjoyed in their imperialist spheres of influence, foreign nations formed an international coalition that ended the uprising. With this victory, additional concessions were granted to foreign nations within China.

Finally, 5,000 years of dynastic rule in China came to an end in 1911. China tumbled into **civil war** as local warlords sought to control their locals, while **nationalist** leaders such as **Sun Yixian** sought to unify China. Civil war took hold of China after Sun's death as **Mao Zedong** and his **communist** forces battled Sun's successor **Jiang Jieshi** for control of the country. In 1949, Mao established a communist government in mainland China while Jiang Jieshi fled to Taiwan and established a **democratic** government there.